

Ladder Safety

Every year thousands of workers are injured after falls from heights, including several dozen resulting in fatality. Many of these incidents are the result of the misuse of ladders. One of the main problems with ladders is that everyone assumes they are simple to operate and because of this, training and safety talks are rarely conducted.

The most common misuses of ladders that lead to workplace injury are:

- Overreaching/leaning due to failure to maintain 3 points of contact
- Using a ladder of insufficient height
- Improper load capacity
- Using a defective ladder
- Placing ladders on unstable surfaces
- Failure to secure rubber feet or to lock the spreaders of a step ladder

While some of these practices may seem to be failures of common sense, many unsafe uses of a ladder can be corrected with proper training.

What's the Danger?

Injury statistics show that the use of ladders presents many hazards. These injuries frequently cause permanent disability to workers.

Ladder Hazards

- Falls from ladders
- MSIs from lifting while on ladders
- Struck by falling ladders
- Struck by materials falling from ladders
- Tripping over ladders
- Lifting heavy ladders
- Striking persons or objects when carrying ladders
- Contact with electrical equipment

3 Points of Contact



Recent Accidents

1. An employee was using a 12-foot step ladder while stocking portable vacuums on the upper storage shelves and lost their balance. The employee was climbing the ladder while carrying a vacuum and fell. The employee sustained a lumbar spine and pulmonary contusions as well as bruising their left hip
2. An employee was standing on top of an 8-foot step ladder, changing the light bulb in an exterior lamp that was mounted on the top of an eave. While the employee was standing on the ladder, the ladder became unbalance and tipped over, causing the employee to fall approximately 8 feet to the ground. The employee struck his head on the pavement, causing trauma to the brain.

Safety Tips

- ✓ Use the right ladder for the job
- ✓ Inspect the ladder before and after use
- ✓ Get help when moving heavy or long ladders
- ✓ Ensure that portable ladders of all types are placed on a stable surface
- ✓ When climbing make sure your shoes/boots are clear of mud, snow and grease
- ✓ Protect base of ladder from accidental contact with traffic (human or vehicle) by securing it with hazard tape or warning signs and/or having someone present at the base
- ✓ Secure the top of all extension ladders when using it to access a platform or scaffold and ensure that the top of the ladder extends 1 meter above the upper surface
- ✓ Face the ladder when ascending and descending – maintain three points of contact
- ✓ Hoist materials or attach them to a belt – do not carry materials in your hands
- ✓ Make sure that only one person at a time is on the ladder
- ✓ Don't stretch or reach beyond the side rails of a ladder. A shift in the center of gravity may cause the ladder to slip
- ✓ Never stand any higher than on the third rung from the top of a step ladder
- ✓ Assess hazards that may arise from the area of work that is being done. NEVER work with a metal ladder around electrical work.

Demonstrate

Review with workers what is 3 points of contact.

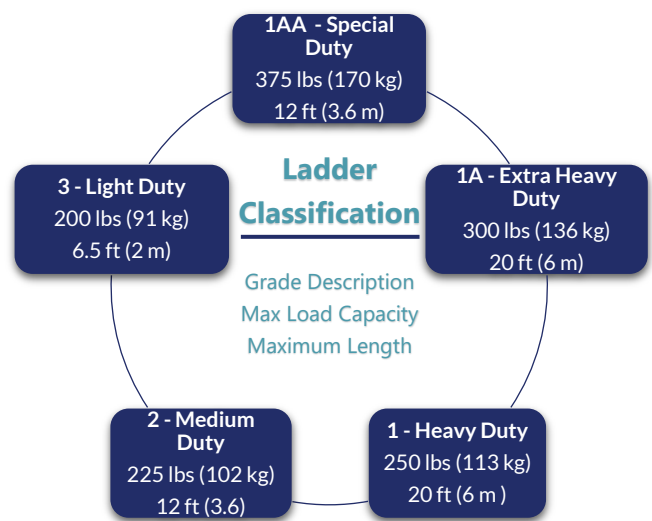
Show workers what to look for when performing a ladder inspection.

Go over proper housekeeping and storing of ladders when completed.

Discussion

Review your procedures for reporting defective equipment with workers. If unable to do so, create procedures with your safety and health committee or worker representative.

Discuss Ladder Classification and maximum load ratings specific to ladders in the workplace.



NOTE: All tools and materials carried up and down a ladder must be calculated into the maximum load capacity.



Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation

Part 13 – Entrances, Exits, Stairways and Ladders
Part 14 – Fall Protection
CAN/CSA – Z11-18 – Portable Ladders

Workers Involved in this Safety Talk

Date: _____

Name	Signature

Name	Signature

Notes
